

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Parks & Recreation Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval to terminate the 1974 Lease Agreement for the Levering Mill House

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Date: July 21, 2017

- I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:** Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners approval to terminate the 1974 Lease Agreement for the Levering Mill House, known as the former Bala Library.
- II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:** Lease termination and the associated expenses require Board approval.
- III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):**
- IV. Other Relevant Background Information:**

In 1915, the Women's Club of Bala Cynwyd (WCBC) founded the Bala Library. It was originally located in a room at Union Fire House. The library's growth resulted in the need to build a new library. Property at 327 Levering Mill Rd. was purchased and in 1926 – 1927, the Bala Cynwyd Memorial Library was built and dedicated in honor of those who lost their lives in Work War I.

In 1974 the library relocated to a new, larger building at its current location. The Levering Mill Rd. building reverted to the WCBC and was renamed, Levering Mill House. The Township entered an agreement to operate and maintain the building as the Bala Cynwyd Senior Citizens Center. The lease restricts its use to a senior citizen center only, though the building continues to be used as a polling location for Voting District 13-1. Parking is extremely limited.

The building was used from 1974 through 2010 by the Levering Mill Senior Citizens group. Once a vibrant group that conducted a variety of art classes and a respected discussion club, the group dwindled down to approximately 15 active members in the 21st Century and eventually disbanded in 2010.

Discussions with the WCBC continued intermittently since 2010 to determine alternate uses for the facility as well as the Township's exit from the lease. While the facility was used sparingly as meeting space, parking and rest room accessibility made it inappropriate for Township sponsored activities.

The Merion Foundation purchased the property of the Women's Club of Bala Cynwyd, including Levering Mill House from WCBC organization in 2016 and negotiations began in 2017 between the Township and The Merion Foundation to exit the lease.

Below is a summary of Townships responsibilities according to the lease agreement. The Township was required to return the physical assets to a state-of-good-repair

- a. Keep the property free from dirt and refuse.
- b. Replace broken windows and doors.
- c. Keep the plumbing open.
- d. Perform general repairs to the premises.

Due to some deferral maintenance by the Township some repairs are required to return the property and terminate the lease. These items have been negotiated through a series of meetings which total \$45,900. A detailed conditions assessment and the cost estimate is attached.

Terminating this lease is in the best interest of both parties.

- It will provide the Merion Foundation the opportunity to use the facility as they desire for their needs, while continuing it as a polling location for Voting District 13-1.
- It will remove an ongoing Operating and Capital expense for the Township which has had little to no consistent use for the Building.
- By Terminating the lease by a financial agreement in lieu of repairs, the Township avoids the costly requirements of Public bid requirements and engineering to complete the work.

V. Impact On Township Finances: The scope of repair returning the building to a state-of-good-repair totals \$45,900. The payment would be made to the Merion Foundation and they would contract the repairs as part of the lease termination. These funds are budgeted within the 2017 Capital Improvement Program - Facilities Improvements #4025.

VI. Staff Recommendation: The Board of Commissioners approve the termination of the 1974 Lease Agreement for the Levering Mill House and settlement of repair obligations at \$45,900.